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Chairman: Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

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AGENDA ITEM 86: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS (continued) (A/51/98-S/1996/270, A/51/130, A/C.4/51/L.9 and L.10*)

1. Mr. ABDULLAH AHMAD (Malaysia) said that the importance of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the maintenance of international peace and security could not be denied. Those operations, however, constituted only one of the measures which the Organization could take in the area of conflict resolution. Perhaps it would be more important to strengthen preventive diplomacy with a view to averting the eruption of major conflicts in different parts of the world. Moreover, if solutions to conflicts were to be permanent, peacekeeping must go hand in hand with peace-building.

2. While peacekeeping operations were not the ultimate solution but rather a measure of last resort, the United Nations had recently been compelled to launch an increasing number of such operations. It was imperative that they should be carried out within a framework of impartiality, that their mandates and objectives should be clearly defined and that they should be adequately financed. Only on that basis would United Nations peacekeeping operations enjoy the support of the international community and have a greater chance of success.

3. The deplorable financial situation of the United Nations continued to give cause for concern. The major contributors' arrears in the payment of their assessed contributions to the regular budget had forced the United Nations to borrow from its peacekeeping accounts, thereby delaying payment to troop-contributing States for expenses relating to troops and equipment. That could affect the participation of Member States, particularly the developing countries, in future peacekeeping operations. His delegation therefore urged Member States to honour their obligations and pay outstanding debts and current contributions on time and without conditions. It also urged the Secretary-General to accord the highest priority to the early settlement of all pending claims and to ensure that reimbursement took place in a timely fashion.

4. While the secondment of loaned officers had contributed to the easing of the financial burden of the United Nations, his delegation was concerned at the Organization's increasing dependency on personnel loaned by Member States. That had also created an imbalance in the representation of developing countries. Most of the loaned officers were from developed countries and many of them had been assigned to key posts in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. His delegation therefore urged that the recruitment of loaned officers in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be guided as far as possible by the principle of equitable geographical representation.

5. Standby arrangements had been established in order to ensure that troop deployment for peacekeeping operations occurred with the necessary speed. Thus far, 54 countries had agreed to participate in those arrangements. Malaysia was one of the five countries which had signed the memorandum of understanding establishing them. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop further and improve those arrangements, and trusted that the Secretariat would continue to brief Member States in that regard. His

delegation urged Member States to cooperate closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in order to improve the ability of United Nations technicians to respond effectively and rapidly in crisis situations.

6. His delegation shared the concern of other delegations over the length of time currently required to deploy peacekeeping operations after the Security Council established their mandates. It therefore fully supported the establishment of the rapidly deployable headquarters team in the Secretariat, which would not only save time, but also, and more importantly, would help to save lives. However, it shared the concern voiced on several occasions by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries concerning the methodology to be used in setting up the headquarters, with regard to both staffing and funding. Bearing in mind that not all developing countries were in a position to provide officers gratis, ample consultation on the matter with all Member States was of paramount importance. With regard to financing, his delegation supported the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund for the rapidly deployable mission headquarters, and agreed that the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be duly taken into account in the selection of officers for the headquarters.

7. As for training, his delegation requested the Secretariat to seek regular, predictable sources of financing for the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to keep Member States informed of its activities and to make available to them all studies carried out by the Unit as expeditiously as possible. It also urged the Committee to promote greater sharing of peacekeeping training experience and expertise among Member States. In 1996, his Government had established its own peacekeeping training centre with the objective of training military observers, staff officers and civilian police. The centre would be open to foreign participants.

8. At the previous meeting of the Special Committee, a number of countries, including Malaysia, had expressed support for making the Special Committee open-ended. Since it was the only forum that dealt in depth with all aspects of peacekeeping operations, all Member States should have an opportunity to be actively involved in its work. In that connection, he welcomed the draft resolution which proposed including those Member States that met the conditions stipulated in the report of the Special Committee (A/51/130) in its membership.

9. Mr. BARG (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that United Nations activities to maintain international peace and security were increasingly important, especially in view of the constant eruption of conflicts and civil wars and the suffering of millions of people who endured severe hardship, either as a result of countries' internal strife or because of external intervention. That situation affected not only specific countries, but the entire international community as well; it was therefore necessary to find ways to prevent the spread of those conflicts from one region to another.

10. In the light of the efforts made in the field of peacekeeping and the experience gained in that regard, it was appropriate to reaffirm the principles that should govern those operations. First, peacekeeping operations must observe the purposes and principles of the United Nations, especially the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States unless the parties to the conflict agreed that such intervention was needed. Second, the

same standards must apply to interventions in all parts of the world, and no country should be allowed to seek to advance its own petty aims or strategic interests. In that connection, the international community must attach greater importance to the problems of Africa. Third, dispute settlement processes between the parties should be encouraged, since they could help to alleviate the suffering of peoples and to limit the deployment of international forces; the use of preventive diplomacy should be promoted to prevent conflicts from escalating. Fourth, all States must pledge not to foment ethnic conflicts and to provide economic assistance to poorer countries in order to help prevent conflicts and keep them from spreading.

11. He reaffirmed the importance of the role of regional organizations in peacekeeping operations, since such organizations were more familiar with the regions and circumstances in which conflicts arose; if they were given the material and political support they needed, they could effectively help to reduce internal and other conflicts at the regional level. Lastly, he shared the view of other countries that peacekeeping operations were not the only means of settling disputes and that they should be carried out only when all other means had been exhausted. Moreover, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be expanded and the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be observed in its composition.

12. Mr. MACEDO (Mexico) said that his country attached special importance to the recommendation to expand the Special Committee's membership, since he was sure that the contributions of other States Members of the United Nations would enrich the Special Committee's work.

13. Peacekeeping operations, which had no explicit legal basis in the Charter of the United Nations, had become one of the Organization's primary instruments for dealing with conflicts; however, they were not the best means of settling disputes. The Organization's efforts could not replace those of the parties concerned to reach agreements that would end their differences. Peace must be born of the will of the parties in conflict. The consent of the parties to the establishment, deployment and functioning of a peacekeeping operation was essential to its success. In addition, peacekeeping operations must have a clear and specific mandate and their scope must be determined in advance. Although some degree of flexibility was needed, activities should abide by the mandates decided upon by the Security Council.

14. With respect to the establishment of a rapidly deployable United Nations force, it must be borne in mind that the speed of the Organization's intervention in a given conflict would not lead to a lasting solution if the political will of the parties was lacking. In addition, a strict legal definition of the mandate and functions of such a force would be necessary. It would be unacceptable for the force to be used in internal conflicts or to act without the express consent of all the parties concerned, since the sovereignty of States was a principle that could not be compromised. From a practical standpoint, it seemed inappropriate to design mechanisms that could impose onerous financial burdens on the Organization and its Members.

15. Chapter VII of the Charter referred exclusively to actions taken collectively to penalize a country which violated the international legal order. Such actions represented a last resort which should be used only when all of the

other means provided for in the Charter had been exhausted. The Mexican Government was therefore concerned about the proliferation of mandates which almost routinely invoked that set of exceptional procedures. The matter was not a trivial one. Repeatedly invoking Chapter VII did not strengthen the Organization, but only revealed its incompetence and lack of imagination.

16. One issue addressed by the Special Committee had been the staffing of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, which comprised an undue proportion of so-called "loaned officers". Mexico did not question the capacity of those officers or the administrative benefits which the Organization could derive from their services, which were provided free of charge. However, that situation, which was irregular in any case, violated the provisions of the Charter and skewed the Department's orientation in favour of developed countries. Once again, therefore, Mexico called upon the United Nations Secretariat to correct that situation and to follow established procedures for the recruitment of international staff.

17. Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Pakistan's commitment to United Nations peacekeeping efforts was in line with its consistent policy of supporting all efforts to strengthen the Organization's role in preserving international peace and security. Pakistan continued to be one of the largest troop contributors to the various United Nations peacekeeping operations. Moreover, it had offered to provide an infantry battalion for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and two brigades for the United Nations standby forces proposed by the Secretary-General.

18. Several points were particularly important and bore repeating. First, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building were the cornerstones of United Nations peace efforts. The United Nations should develop an early warning mechanism that would enable it to act before the outbreak of conflicts instead of intervening after they had already erupted. Second, peacekeeping operations could not function effectively without clear political guidelines, precise mandates, effective command and control structures and well-defined rules of engagement. Third, the mandate, character and duration of peacekeeping operations should not be altered. The Security Council must stay abreast of the operations at all stages, and the United Nations Secretariat should ensure a smooth transition from preventive diplomacy to peacekeeping. Fourth, the concept of standby forces must be addressed in a manner that would enable developing countries to participate with a full complement of the requisite weapon systems. Moreover, the complex issues raised by the proposed United Nations rapid deployment team should be discussed in a transparent manner with all interested Member States. Fifth, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations must abide by the principle of due geographical representation in its staffing structure. Representation should be commensurate with troop contributions in the field. Sixth, assessed contributions must be paid in full and on time. The non-reimbursement of troop contributors restricted the participation of Member States, particularly developing ones, in current and future peacekeeping operations. Seventh, all troops performed the same tasks and faced similar risks, irrespective of their origin or nationality; accordingly, there should be a uniform scale of death and disability compensation.

19. The shortage of financial resources seemed to be the bane of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The answer did not lie in the subcontracting of the responsibilities of the United Nations to others, as would occur with the establishment of the rapidly deployable headquarters team. A solution had to be found within the principles and procedures of multilateralism and collective security of the United Nations. The discussions of the Special Committee on the issue had been inconclusive. Many doubts remained, and it was hoped that the Secretariat would provide answers and set a firm date for further discussions on the issue prior to finalization of any plans for the staffing of the proposed headquarters.

20. The issue of military officers on loan to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had been extensively discussed during the previous sessions of the Special Committee, and an overwhelming majority of Member States, including the non-aligned countries, had expressed serious concerns in that regard and had called for a halt to that practice. However, the number of loaned officers continued to increase and the Secretariat had not provided the information requested by many delegations about the issue. Lastly, Pakistan was deeply concerned over the adverse effects that the deteriorating financial situation had on the reimbursement of troop costs and the use of contingent-owned equipment. That alarming situation was threatening the continuance of operations.

21. Mr. OLIYNYK (Ukraine) said that the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations had taken on a complex and multifunctional character. The disappointing experience of some recent peacekeeping operations had demonstrated that lasting peace could not be achieved without the political will of the parties to the conflict. Moreover, the parties should comply with the ceasefire agreements and cooperate fully and in good faith. His delegation was convinced that the success of any peacekeeping operation depended on the development of a clear and comprehensive concept for deploying and implementing operations, with realistic objectives and a mandate that did not allow any changes in the rules during its implementation. At the same time, every operation should be deployed with the strength necessary to achieve the tasks entrusted to it and should have the ability to protect itself. Otherwise, the credibility of the United Nations as well as the safety of its personnel would be undermined.

22. As far as "regional approaches" to peacekeeping operations were concerned, United Nations activities must be based on the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and must comply strictly with the principle that no State could arrogate to itself the right to be the main guarantor of peace and security in the region. Ukraine considered participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations as one of its foreign policy priorities and had been a significant troop contributor since the first year of its independence. One element that had enabled it to participate in such activities had been its active cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) within the "Partnership for Peace" programme, which had also demonstrated the operational and tactical compatibility of Ukrainian military units with those of NATO member States.

23. His delegation considered it important and urgent to further enhance the capacity of the United Nations to respond promptly to crisis situations in the world, and supported the adoption of specific measures to strengthen the system

of standby arrangements. In February 1994, Ukraine had expressed its willingness to participate in such arrangements and had informed the Secretariat about the specific military resources that it could provide. The rapidly deployable headquarters team would be an important complement to the existing standby arrangements.

24. The safety of United Nations personnel should be an integral part of the mandate of any peacekeeping operation. The Organization and its Member States should take all necessary measures to ensure that such staff had an adequate level of security, since the current situation was not satisfactory. It was disturbing that in the short period of time since September 1995, 56 members of peacekeeping forces had lost their lives in the line of duty. In that regard, the entry into force of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations Peacekeeping and Associated Personnel, adopted by the General Assembly in 1994, would constitute a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, thus far, only 43 States had signed the Convention and nine had become parties to it, although 71 Member States currently took part in United Nations peacekeeping activities. That was why his delegation had taken the initiative of formulating the draft resolution contained in document A/C.4/51/L.10, jointly sponsored by many Member States, which urged all States to consider ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to the Convention. His delegation attached great importance to the proposal to expand the membership of the Special Committee, the only specialized forum dealing with the vital problems related to peacekeeping operations. His delegation also considered it unfair that some troop-contributing countries, including Ukraine, were not represented at all in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

25. While his delegation welcomed the statement of the President of the Security Council on 28 March 1996 (S/PRST/1996/13), on arrangements to strengthen the consultative mechanism between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, it would favour further steps in that direction, in particular, the institutionalization of the consultative process on the basis of Article 29 of the Charter.

26. His delegation was greatly concerned about the use of landmines in areas of conflict and the serious danger that they posed to civilians and to United Nations peacekeepers. That was why it welcomed the important initiative taken by Germany aimed at changing the approach to that long-standing and complicated problem, and supported the statement by the President of the Security Council on demining in the context of peacekeeping operations. However, the measures proposed in that statement were not exhaustive. His delegation hoped that during the next session of the Special Committee that issue would be thoroughly considered.

27. Mr. PARK (Republic of Korea) said that although the number of United Nations peacekeepers had declined considerably over the past year, the importance of their role in maintaining international peace and security, and the complexity of their task had not diminished. The multidimensional, intra-State nature of conflicts required that United Nations peacekeeping operations should be equipped with the skills to tackle a variety of military, political, humanitarian and civilian problems.

28. His delegation welcomed the steps taken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to enhance its capacity to plan and direct complex peacekeeping missions, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue to refine the machinery of peacekeeping and to seek more efficient ways of ensuring the success of peacekeeping operations. There was a pressing need for greater conceptual clarity in addressing peacekeeping-related issues. It was important, for example, that a clear distinction should be drawn between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, and that all peacekeeping operations should strictly observe the principles of impartiality, the consent of the parties, and the non-use of force except in self-defence. It was also imperative that each of the three core components of peacekeeping - mandates, resources and objectives - should be given equal consideration. In that context, the discussions in the Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace on the issues of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, sanctions, coordination and post-conflict peace-building, could play a crucial role in tightening the conceptual focus.

29. As an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping operations and a non-permanent member of the Security Council, the Republic of Korea welcomed the newly established process for consultations between troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat and encouraged the Council to continue to improve the consultation process with the aim of enhancing the legitimacy, effectiveness, credibility and transparency of the Council's work in the field of peacekeeping.

30. There was a vital need to improve the rapid deployment capability of the United Nations. He therefore welcomed the Secretariat's proposal for the development of a rapidly deployable headquarters capacity as an effective complement to the standby arrangements system. In implementing the proposal, special attention should be focussed on three critical areas: geographical representation, transparency and methods of funding. The Republic of Korea also supported the Secretariat's proposal that the mission headquarters' personnel should be a combination of personnel nominated by Member States, existing Secretariat staff and other individuals earmarked within their home countries for training or actual deployment. It also welcomed the Secretariat's suggestion to establish a trust fund to cover the mission headquarters' personnel costs for those Member States which were unable to provide personnel gratis. Although questions had been raised about the sustainability of the trust fund and those questions should be addressed in ongoing deliberations, he believed that such a fund would be the most viable option, in light of the current financial situation of the Organization.

31. In the conviction that peacekeeping operations could be successful only if they enjoyed the broad participation and endorsement of a large majority of Member States, the Republic of Korea supported the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to expand its membership and looked forward to furthering its contribution to the work of the Special Committee as a full-fledged member starting from the 1997 session.

32. Mr. ACOSTA (Venezuela) said that the end of the cold war had created great expectations about the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the complexity of current conflicts, the economic and social imbalances affecting many countries and the seriousness of the Organization's financial crisis indicated that the international

community could not abandon its search for ways of meeting the challenges of the future, which appeared to exceed the Organization's capacity to achieve its principal objectives. Peacekeeping operations had become diversified and tended to be more complex and urgent. The experience of the United Nations in that field included successes and failures on which it was necessary to reflect in order to perfect the positive aspects while correcting the mistakes made. Based on that analysis, it might be possible to establish certain guidelines for action aimed at making peacekeeping operations an effective mechanism for resolving conflicts.

33. Notwithstanding the support from Member States for peacekeeping operations, in recent years the United Nations had adopted measures in that field which had provoked severe criticisms, particularly against the procedures used to launch certain operations, such as those undertaken in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Angola and Rwanda. It must be remembered therefore that such operations should be initiated in accordance with the Principles set out in Article 2 of the Charter and that peacekeeping forces should be deployed in accordance with the general criteria recognized by Member States, namely, that they should have the consent of the parties, have a clear and defined mandate, have the necessary personnel and equipment as well as guarantees of reliable funding, conduct themselves in an impartial manner and have unity of command under the Secretary-General. The observance of those criteria would forestall situations that impaired the credibility, universality and impartiality of the Organization in that field. Peacekeeping operations should be considered as a complement to efforts to resolve conflicts through negotiation and should not replace dialogue between the parties.

34. Given the increasing interrelationship between political, economic, social, military and cultural factors in conflicts, the concept of peacekeeping had been modified and had acquired a multidimensional and integral character. But, even though the international community could not remain indifferent to the suffering caused by war, that argument could not be used as justification for peacekeeping operations to take on tasks, such as those of a humanitarian nature, which were within the exclusive competence of other organs and bodies of the United Nations system. It was essential to better define the mandates of those organs and bodies and, at the same time, to improve coordination among them, with a view to safeguarding the political and financial capacity of the Organization.

35. In addition, even though peacekeeping operations were based on political considerations, they should not be used as an instrument of coercive action nor be confused with peace-enforcement mechanisms. The coercive measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter could be taken only in situations that were clearly defined as threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression and not in an indiscriminate way. The time had come to define and adopt basic guidelines to achieve greater effectiveness in the planning, organization and deployment of peacekeeping operations. The political nature of such operations should guarantee their flexibility and strength and enable them to adapt to the complex characteristics of each conflict, based on the consent of the parties thereto.

36. There was need to continue the examination of issues related to the training and instruction of civilian, police and military personnel of the States participating in the operations, with due regard for the fact that the

responsibility for such training and instruction lay with the Organization and its Member States. The United Nations should consolidate its programmes in that area through a wider dissemination of information and the organization of national seminars and other similar activities, so that the Governments and authorities of the different countries could familiarize themselves with those activities, thus ensuring that a larger number of countries participated in the peacekeeping operations, without losing sight of the fact that not all States were equally prepared to contribute human and logistical support for the operations. It was essential to develop a standardized training programme which included practical courses and advisory services in basic areas with a view to providing systematic instruction to the personnel earmarked for such functions. In that connection, attention should be drawn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 57 to 61 of the report of the Special Committee (A/51/130). More information and systematic training would enable Governments to better understand the concept of peacekeeping and help to reinforce the idea of establishing standby forces in each country, which would be mobilized only when authorization was given for peacekeeping operations, in conformity with the principles set out in the Charter and with the criteria accepted by all Member States. It would of course be for each Government to take the decision to participate in those operations.

37. It was necessary to consider in greater detail the initiative to establish a United Nations rapidly deployable headquarters team, taking due account of the political, legal, administrative and financial aspects of the initiative. The Secretary-General should be requested to prepare a report containing an analysis of the proposal and its ramifications. The proposal to transform the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations into an open-ended body also deserved support. In conformity with the Charter, the maintenance of international peace and security was the responsibility of all Member States. Moreover, the fact that peacekeeping operations were financed through a prorated system of mandatory contributions was clear proof that such operations were the collective responsibility of all Member States.

38. Mr. ABDULAI (Ghana) expressed appreciation for the statement made at the previous meeting by Mr. Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, on the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. He welcomed the initiatives adopted recently to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including the establishment of the Situation Centre and the Lessons Learned Unit, and the informal interdepartmental groups instituted to enhance coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Political Affairs. The ongoing discussions for the establishment of a rapidly deployable operational headquarters team in the Secretariat were a further indication of the common desire to improve the efficiency of operations through timely intervention to save lives and property in conflict areas.

39. Like other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, his country supported the concept of a rapidly deployable headquarters team and emphasized the importance of such a team being set up in a transparent manner, bearing in mind the multilateral character of the Organization and the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations as it pertained to the independence of the

staff and to equitable geographical distribution. He expressed reservations again concerning the preponderance of loaned military staff from one region of the world in all strategic offices of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; such creeping privatization of the Organization ran counter to the spirit of independence which should govern all the actions of each United Nations staff member. The independence of international civil servants and of the office of the Secretary-General, as the Secretary-General himself, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, had stressed in his Staff Day address on 13 September 1996, constituted the most precious asset of the Organization. Action must be taken promptly to safeguard such independence.

40. The current staffing situation was rooted in the financial crisis. It was to be hoped that all States in arrears would do their utmost to meet their commitments, so that the United Nations would be able to function effectively in all areas, including peacekeeping operations. Non-payment of assessed contributions affected not only the Organization, but also the small developing States which contributed troops and which could not be reimbursed on time for lack of funds. Non-payment also penalized the members of peacekeeping missions, particularly those from developing countries, who were sometimes compelled to serve under very difficult conditions, as the Organization could not afford to repair or replace their living quarters, equipment and vehicles. Those problems were compounded, in spite of the new reimbursement procedures, by bureaucratic bottlenecks which delayed reimbursements to troop-contributing countries, while in some peacekeeping operations, millions of dollars were lost through waste and malfeasance. He hoped that stringent measures would be taken urgently to rectify that situation.

41. His country was proud of having participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations for 36 years. According to figures released by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for September 1996, Ghana was the fifteenth largest troop contributor, with 765 nationals serving in seven missions. He therefore welcomed the recommendation for an increase in the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. All troop contributors should have the opportunity to participate as full members in the work of the Committee. His country was also proud of being one of the few countries to have signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, enabling it to participate in the standby arrangements system, and it called on other Member States to do the same. He also encouraged the Secretariat to pursue the efforts aimed at bringing the system into operation.

42. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that the rapid expansion of United Nations peacekeeping operations since the end of the cold war reflected the belief in such operations as an effective instrument for stabilizing, containing and helping to resolve conflicts which undermined confidence among States and endangered international peace and security. Recent peacekeeping operations had resulted in both successes and failures. Unfortunately, the few failures had given rise to criticism, and had undermined the faith of some members of the international community in the viability of such operations. For that reason, certain Member States now wished for the United Nations to be less active in peacekeeping and to give greater emphasis to preventive measures, such as preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment and other forms of action, including the participation of regional organizations in containing crises. Clearly, there were no easy formulas for resolving certain conflicts, some of which were

rooted in the distant past. His country, which had extensive experience in United Nations and regional peacekeeping activities, was nearly certain that additional peacekeeping operations would be required in the future. It was therefore appropriate that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had, during its two previous sessions, undertaken a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations, taking into account the experience of recent years, with a view to learning from the mistakes made and building on the successes achieved. He also welcomed the work accomplished by the Special Committee at its most recent session with regard to the formulation of guiding principles for the establishment and conduct of peacekeeping operations and the consideration of practical steps to ensure that future peacekeeping operations would have a sound logistical and financial basis. Only in that way could a coherent and integrated strategy for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts be applied. Such a strategy must, inter alia, include preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building.

43. He fully supported the recommendations made by the Special Committee in its current report, particularly those relating to consultations between the Security Council and troop contributors, measures to enhance the capacity of the United Nations for peacekeeping, training, rapid deployment and standby arrangements, the financing operations, cooperation with regional arrangements and the proposal to expand the membership of the Special Committee. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the most serious problem related to financing. The financial crisis of the United Nations, a consequence of the refusal of certain Member States to pay their assessed contributions, had created unacceptable situations, such as arrears in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries. Moreover, bearing in mind that some members of the national forces participating in such operations had given their lives for those efforts, and that the current system of death and disability benefits failed to take full account of their sacrifices, he supported the Secretary-General's proposal to standardize death and disability benefits for troops serving in peacekeeping operations through the establishment of a United Nations-administered global insurance scheme covering all troops.

44. Recent experience had shown that the timeliness of response to conflicts was crucial to the success of peacekeeping operations. In its 1995 report, the Special Committee had urged the Secretary-General to establish a rapidly deployable headquarters team in order to shorten the time lag between a Security Council decision authorizing an operation and its actual deployment. His country, like other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, had expressed concerns about the implementation of that proposal, and welcomed the additional information which the Secretariat had provided on the subject. Maximum support for the initiative could be ensured only through consultations with and the involvement of all Member States concerned. He also reiterated that the funding of such operations should be undertaken through assessed contributions so as to ensure that all Member States had an opportunity to participate fully.

45. The United Nations had primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but that function was not exclusive to the Organization. He recalled, in that connection, the recent successes of various regional and subregional groupings and arrangements in the management of conflicts. Regional involvement, whether in cooperation with the United Nations

or in response to the Organization's abdication of its responsibility, had helped to stabilize situations of conflict in many regions. In that regard, he highlighted the unique role played by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its cooperation with other regional organizations and the United Nations in the areas of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacemaking.

46. With respect to the staffing of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Nigeria was concerned that recent reductions in the Headquarters staff of that Department might undermine its valuable work and threaten the success of future peacekeeping operations, if it led to the loss of the invaluable expertise built up over the years. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Kofi Annan, had given assurances that the reorganization would not affect the Department's structural integrity; however, the increasing use of loaned and seconded officers was an indication that the vital services might not have been spread. Notwithstanding their valuable contributions to the United Nations, loaned officers were not a substitute for an independent international civil service that reflected as wide a geographical distribution as possible.

47. Mr. PHOMMAHAXAY (Lao People's Democratic Republic), said that, during its five decades of existence, the United Nations had been sorely tried in many conflicts in various parts of the world. That experience had helped to strengthen its role in solving world problems. Peacekeeping operations continued to play an important role in preventing the escalation of conflicts and creating conditions for the peaceful settlement of disputes. In view of the remarkable proliferation of peacekeeping operations, he was concerned about the increasing tendency to expand their nature and scope. Although his delegation supported any initiative aimed at strengthening the Organization's peacekeeping capabilities, it also expected that such initiatives would be considered with great caution, that past experiences would be taken into account and that peacekeeping operations would not be used as a means of interfering in the internal affairs of States. Any change in such operations must be in line with the guiding principles and definitions set forth in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/51/130).

48. He reiterated the principles relevant to peacekeeping which had been adopted at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Cartagena in 1995, to the effect that peacekeeping operations should strictly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and non-interference in their internal affairs, and should be based on the consent of the parties concerned and the principle of impartiality. Missions must also have clearly defined mandates, objectives and time-frames, as well as assured financing. In that connection, all Member States must pay their contributions in full and on time, in compliance with their obligations under Article 17 of the Charter.

49. With respect to arrangements for consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries, he welcomed the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 28 March 1996 (S/PRST/1996/13), in which the latter had indicated his readiness to chair consultations with troop contributors well before the Council took decisions on the existing mandate of an operation or on the establishment of a new operation. That practice would reinforce the Council's work methods and enhance the transparency of its

actions. However, the Council should also consult those who would be affected by its decisions; namely, the States or parties directly involved in the conflict, which should be given the right to present their views in the Council's informal consultations. Moreover, frequent consultations should be held with the countries bordering on the States in conflict to ensure their continued political support for peacekeeping operations. In the light of the increasing complexity of those missions, it was important to differentiate between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian activities. In addition, peacekeeping operations should not be established until all possibilities had been exhausted; even so, such operations should be of a temporary nature and should be undertaken with the consent of the parties.

50. The proposal to establish a rapidly deployable operational headquarters team was interesting, but many aspects remained to be clarified, particularly the precise methodology for setting up such a team. Another issue of concern was the fact that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had a growing number of officers on loan and a shrinking number of posts financed from the regular budget and the support account for peacekeeping operations. The use of loaned personnel, either in the Department or in the proposed headquarters team, should be temporary because the continuation of the current practice would compromise the credibility of the Secretariat, which should be efficient and impartial.

51. Lastly, although peacekeeping operations contributed to international peace and security, more attention must be paid to the root causes of conflicts. Lasting peace could not prevail unless the imperatives of socio-economic development were adequately addressed. The concepts of peace and development were mutually complementary and deserved equal consideration.

52. Mr. OWADA (Japan) said that, although the international situation had changed dramatically since the Organization's establishment, the United Nations continued to play a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security, as prescribed by the Charter. The United Nations was still the only universal organization endowed with the function of coping with destabilizing regional situations and preventing them from spreading to the rest of the world. Currently, the most important means of exercising that function was the implementation of peacekeeping operations, which had begun over 40 years earlier and undoubtedly would continue well into the future. However, the modalities of those operations had changed over time, although their basic purpose remained the same. Traditionally, they had focused primarily on intervening between the parties in conflict to prevent the recurrence of hostilities. Recently, however, they had come to be regarded as an essential part of the global peace process and had been entrusted with tasks such as election monitoring, human rights monitoring, repatriation of refugees, national reconstruction and rehabilitation and even the protection of personnel engaged in humanitarian relief operations. In the light of the changing world situation and of the precious experience gained in operations such as those carried out in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia, it would be useful to reconsider the modalities of peacekeeping operations, as reflected in their mandates, to ensure that they responded to evolving realities.

53. In view of the importance of ongoing operations, Japan was concerned about the tendency to reduce their number and scope. While that trend reflected both constraints within the United Nations and external conditions, Member States

would make a grave error if they ignored situations of tension which could deteriorate in the absence of a peacekeeping operation. It would be unfortunate if financial constraints caused the United Nations to adopt a hesitant attitude towards the establishment of viable peacekeeping operations.

54. The participation of various countries in training activities and seminars related to peacekeeping operations facilitated an exchange of views that contributed to better mutual understanding and confidence-building. His country promoted such exchanges and participated actively in symposia and seminars held for that purpose.

55. Plans for the establishment of a rapidly deployable operational headquarters team had reached their final stage in 1995. His country supported an improvement in the Organization's rapid-reaction capabilities in relation to peacekeeping and was prepared to extend cooperation for the further development of that concept. Moreover, the viability of the operations depended, first and foremost, on the establishment of a firm financial base. Taking into account the financial situation of the United Nations and the need to maintain a wide geographical distribution of offices, the rapidly deployable headquarters team should have an appropriate combination of personnel, including officers from developing countries whose expenses would be paid from a trust fund, on-loan officers and Secretariat staff.

56. Secondly, there was a need to review past efforts in order to render future operations more effective. The Training Unit and the Lessons Learned Unit were to be commended for their activities; they deserved greater support from Member States. Thirdly, it was of crucial importance to establish a mechanism for consultations and exchanges of information between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. He therefore welcomed the procedures set out in the statement of 28 March 1996 by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/1996/13).

57. His Government expressed appreciation to Canada for submitting a streamlined draft resolution on the agenda item (A/C.4/51/L.9), the most important element of which was the proposal to expand the membership of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, beginning with the 1997 session. That would enable additional interested countries to participate in the Committee's discussions without impairing its efficiency.

58. With regard to the second draft resolution (A/C.4/51/L.10), on the safety of peacekeeping personnel, which his country had co-sponsored, the cooperation of Member States was essential for the early entry into force of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Unless the safety of personnel engaged in peacekeeping activities was ensured, States would be reluctant to send their nationals on such missions. It was vital that the Convention should specifically protect the personnel involved in humanitarian relief operations carried out under dangerous conditions.

59. Four years earlier, his country had adopted an International Peace Cooperation Act. Since then, it had contributed troops to peacekeeping operations in Cambodia, Mozambique and the Golan Heights and to humanitarian relief operations in Zaire. On the basis of the lessons learned so far, his Government was currently reviewing the Act, in order to determine how Japan

could play a more active role in United Nations activities for the maintenance of international peace and security. He reaffirmed his Government's determination to do everything in its power to cooperate with the United Nations in that worthy endeavour.

60. Mr. WINN (Myanmar) said that in recent years the United Nations had played an increasing role in the negotiation and implementation of complex agreements aimed at resolving long-festering conflicts. While it was essential to maintain international peace and security, peacekeeping operations should not be regarded as a substitute for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The use of armed forces or other collective measures for dealing with threats to the peace should be undertaken only as a last resort.

61. While it was neither desirable nor feasible to adopt inflexible procedures for all peacekeeping operations, such operations must be guided strictly by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. In addition, as the Secretary-General had noted, such operations should uphold the principles of impartiality, consent of the parties and non-use of force, except in self-defence.

62. In the post-cold-war years, the number of peacekeeping operations had increased substantially; in recent years, however, many operations had been terminated or reduced. Some had been successful, while others had failed to live up to expectations, but in either case, the lessons learned could improve current and future operations. In order to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, it was necessary to define their mandates clearly, set feasible and precise objectives and ensure the availability of sufficient resources for their implementation. It was also important for consultations to take place between troop-contributing countries and other interested States and the Security Council. He therefore welcomed the new consultation procedures announced recently by the President of the Council, which would enhance the transparency and coordination of the operations.

63. Adequate financial resources and support were essential to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. He was therefore deeply concerned at the financial situation of the United Nations and the failure of some Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions, in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter. The financing of peacekeeping operations was the collective responsibility of all Member States. His country had always fulfilled its obligations to pay its assessed contributions for peacekeeping operations, and had participated in such operations since 1958, when it had contributed military personnel to the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). Recently, his Government had responded to the Secretary-General's request for contributions of personnel and equipment to the standby forces arrangement. He also supported the Special Committee's recommendation for an increase in its membership through the addition of troop-contributing countries.

64. Lastly, peace and development went hand in hand. While it was important to ensure the success of peacekeeping operations, the need for economic and social development should not be ignored. Poverty and underdevelopment were the root

causes of conflicts that made peacekeeping operations necessary; hence, such operations should not be financed at the expense of development activities. He supported peacekeeping operations undertaken in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter, and hoped that the commendable work of the Department and the Special Committee would lead to enhancing the effectiveness of such operations.

65. Mr. DOS SANTOS (Mozambique) said that, while peacekeeping operations should operate on the basis of consent by the parties concerned, a balance must be struck between the need to respect national sovereignty and the need to safeguard human life in conflict situations. That conclusion underscored the importance of the work of the Special Committee. He therefore welcomed the proposal to enlarge the Special Committee, which would enhance its efficiency in considering issues pertaining to the basic philosophy of peacekeeping operations, and would encourage Member States to strengthen the Organization's role in addressing conflict situations around the world.

66. It was also necessary to ensure sufficient funding for peacekeeping operations in the future. Accordingly, it was very important for each country to pay its assessed contributions in full and on time. That would underscore the political will of Member States to live up to their obligations in a world characterized by the emergence of new and unpredictable situations.

67. Due attention should be given to peace-building mechanisms. The experience of Mozambique demonstrated that a country which was receiving United Nations assistance in the field of peacekeeping should also be provided with the necessary help to consolidate peace and stability once the conflict had been resolved. In that context, effective demobilization of combatants and their integration into society, weapons collection and mine clearance were of paramount importance. In addition, institutions must be strengthened in order to ensure lasting peace and stability and the exercise of democracy.

68. It was also important to address the humanitarian aspects, creating the necessary conditions to facilitate the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons; that was the best way to prevent the emergence of new conflicts which would ultimately require new peacekeeping operations. The programme to repatriate and resettle about 1,700,000 Mozambicans, completed in June 1996, had been one of the largest and most successful operations ever undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. During its implementation, Mozambique had acquired considerable experience and developed capabilities which could be useful for peacekeeping operations worldwide. Mozambican personnel were ready to cooperate when necessary.

69. Although the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had established a number of bodies to increase its effectiveness, acquired considerable experience in that area and carried out many studies, Mozambique was concerned to see that the Organization remained slow to respond to conflict situations and that it repeated errors which had been committed in past operations. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations must be improved. In Africa the recurrence of long-drawn-out conflicts remained a challenge to the work of the international community as a whole and to efforts within the framework of the recently created OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU

should be increased to enable African countries to take a more active role in searching for solutions to conflicts on that continent.

70. Mr. DOMINGO (Philippines) associated his delegation with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. He fully agreed that peacekeeping operations played a vital role in preserving world peace and security, but they should be used only as a last resort and not as a first option. A renewed commitment by the United Nations to progress and development would be the best safeguard against conflicts.

71. His delegation welcomed the Special Committee's recommendation that its membership should be expanded, thereby enabling greater numbers of Member States to participate. The Philippines looked forward, as did other members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to making a more meaningful contribution to the Special Committee's work and to participating as a member in its decision-making. He therefore called on the Fourth Committee to adopt the draft resolution on the item under consideration by consensus.

72. His delegation placed the highest priority on the safety and security of all men and women serving with the United Nations, particularly those exposed to the hazards of peacekeeping operations. His delegation therefore joined others in calling for the ratification of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

73. He fully supported the position stated by the spokesman for the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries concerning the need to ensure greater transparency in respect of the rapid deployment force and to clarify the relationship between the rapidly deployable mission headquarters and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. All Member States had a stake in the success of such operations. The key posts in the Department were manned by officers who were on loan to the Organization, and although their professional and technical competence was not in question, the fact that they greatly outnumbered United Nations staff was a sad commentary on the present state of affairs; it should be rectified on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Charter.

74. His delegation called on all countries, particularly those which were financially capable of doing so, to honour their basic commitments to the United Nations by paying their contributions in full and on time. The current reliance on intermediate solutions, such as loaned personnel and trust funds, must not become established practice or be accepted as an answer to the Organization's financial difficulties. Finally, an appropriate balance must be maintained between peacekeeping activities and those devoted to development. The success of the United Nations as a whole depended on it.

75. Mr. SAI (Algeria) expressed his delegation's full support for the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The United Nations currently had 17 peacekeeping operations throughout the world and the Security Council had just approved a new operation for the Great Lakes region of Africa. That demonstrated the commitment of the Organization to maintaining peace and security for the benefit of humanity, and the worldwide scope of its activities. Without claiming to be the sole body responsible for dealing with situations of tension and conflict, the United Nations was currently involved, of its own will, in a number of endeavours to

resolve conflicts between or within States. That function of the United Nations reflected the clear intentions of its Member States expressed through a number of organs, mainly the Security Council, the General Assembly and its subsidiary organs, as well as the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. Nonetheless, it had to be recognized that those bodies did not always fully reflect the concerns of all, especially when it came to formulating mandates, conducting peacekeeping operations and evaluating their results. Although the Organization acted on behalf of the entire international community, the real decision-making power continued to be the privilege of a limited number of countries whose motivations did not always reflect the collective will of Member States. Most States had few opportunities to make themselves heard. The Special Committee was practically the only forum where States could make themselves heard; even there they could only express their opinions, whereas in reality what was needed was for all interested countries to take an effective part in all aspects of the management of peacekeeping operations.

76. Algeria was one of the numerous countries which had requested, at the meeting of the Security Council held on 20 October 1995, that the right of all States to be fully informed regarding any decision to initiate or extend a peacekeeping operation should be effectively recognized. The Council's response, set out in a statement by its President on 28 March 1996, was a step forward, although it did not fully meet the wishes and aspirations expressed in debates.

77. In the context of peacekeeping operations, his delegation emphasized the need for the Organization to react quickly to situations requiring the initiation of such operations, in order to avert massacres such as those which had taken place in Africa. There was also an urgent need to resolve the Organization's financial crisis, which was due mainly to the fact that some countries had failed to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations. Reference should be made especially to the permanent members of the Security Council, who had a particular responsibility in that respect. Finally, the United Nations must duly reimburse troop-contributing countries, particularly those with limited resources, for expanses incurred in connection with the participation of their troops in peacekeeping operations. In that context, establishment of a uniform system of death or disability compensation for peacekeeping operations personnel would restore the principle of equity and equality of all those who worked in the service of the United Nations.

78. Algeria supported the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations by paying its contributions on time and contributing troops for peacekeeping operations, including those of Cambodia, Angola and Haiti. Algeria had also provided material and logistical support to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, thereby demonstrating its sincere desire to cooperate with the international community in the establishment of lasting peace and security in the regional and international spheres. That had been and would remain his country's policy.

79. Mr. TASOVSKI (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) supported the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee contained in part III of its report (A/51/130). In view of the serious ongoing conflicts and the various situations that might result in conflicts in different parts of the world, it was important to define clear and realistic objectives for

peacekeeping operations and to ensure sufficient resources for the implementation of their mandates.

80. Given the complexity of peacekeeping operations, he welcomed the new process for consultations between troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat as set out in the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 28 March 1996. He was also of the view that the safety of peacekeeping forces was of paramount importance and therefore strongly supported the International Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

81. His delegation concurred with the Special Committee's position that peacekeeping operations should strictly observe the principles enshrined in the Charter concerning respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in their domestic affairs. It was therefore very important that peacekeeping operations should be provided with clearly defined mandates, command structures and secure financing. It should be noted, however, that the least-developed countries had a limited capacity to contribute.

82. The United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) played a vital role in support of the peace process in the Balkans region. Bearing in mind that the security situation in the region following the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords remained fragile, and that peace and stability in his country depended to a large extent on the situation in the region, his Government had requested the extension of the mandate of UNPREDEP for another six months, beginning on 30 November 1996.

83. Mr. NEGA (Ethiopia) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Since the end of the cold war, peace, the rule of law and good governance had been consolidated in many countries. However, in some regions, internal conflicts had resulted in the loss of countless lives, destruction of property, displacement of thousands of refugees and the collapse of social structures. For that reason, the international community, particularly the African countries, must do everything within their power to prevent the recurrence of conflicts. A comprehensive conflict management strategy was needed that would address the underlying causes of conflicts, determine the nature of each dispute and not only terminate ongoing disputes but also prevent their recurrence. In that regard, the consequences of economic dislocation must be borne in mind, especially in Africa, where the deteriorating economic situation had led to civil strife and conflicts; economic development must be revitalized in conflict-prone areas. In order for international and regional peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts to be effective, the causes of each conflict and the needs and aspirations of the parties must first be understood. In that context, consideration should be given to local initiatives that could offer innovative ways to resolve conflicts based on traditional values.

84. Having itself gone through a long period of internal conflicts, Ethiopia fully recognized the value of peace and the need to resolve conflicts through peaceful means. It had actively participated in the quest for peaceful and lasting solutions to conflicts and in the efforts to create new institutions and mechanisms that would facilitate the resolution of conflicts in the Africa region. It had actively participated in the establishment of the Central Organ

of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and would continue to cooperate with OAU in that area.

85. The report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping operations contained important proposals and recommendations. In that regard, his delegation subscribed to the principle that every effort should be made to resolve conflicts by peaceful means before resorting to other measures, including enforcement measures, and wished to stress that peacekeeping operations should be conducted on the basis of the full consent and cooperation of the parties to the conflict, complete impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defence.

86. In view of the commendable work done by the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, his delegation endorsed the Special Committee's recommendation that regular and adequate financing should be made available to that Unit. Its studies and findings would enable Member States to better understand the impact of peacekeeping operations and the capability of the United Nations in that regard, and would help to identify the shortcomings that had prevented specific missions from achieving complete success. In that context, he noted the seminar organized by the Secretariat to review the results of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). The important recommendations that had been adopted by the seminar included the need to closely monitor crisis situations before they escalated into violent conflicts and the need to expedite the deployment of peacekeeping operations once they were authorized by the Security Council. The seminar had also stressed the need to inform the local population in a timely manner about the main objectives of each mission.

87. The Rwandan experience showed that delay in sending and equipping a peacekeeping mission prolonged the suffering of millions of people who put their trust in the international community. It was therefore surprising that, in the face of human tragedy that was unfolding in the Great Lakes region, the competent international machinery had not reacted with the requisite alacrity in order to deploy in the area a peacekeeping force that would prevent an escalation of the crisis.

88. While the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security lay with the United Nations, regional organizations could also make a valuable contribution to facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts. However, regional initiatives, especially in developing countries, had so far been constrained by logistical and financial difficulties. In that context, he drew attention to the Special Committee's recommendation on the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the field of peacekeeping. His delegation urged the international community to support the political commitment of African countries by providing logistical, financial and technical support to the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

89. Mr. TAPIA (Chile) said that the growing importance of peacekeeping operations in the work of the United Nations during the past few years had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the increase in the number of such operations meant that new armed conflicts had arisen which had affected thousands of people. The international community, acting through the United

Nations, had been compelled to assign valuable and substantial resources to peacekeeping instead of using them for productive activities that facilitated development and progress, especially in those countries most affected by poverty. On the other hand, it was encouraging that the international community had been able to organize and implement such peacekeeping operations. In that connection, his delegation shared the view of other Member States that peacekeeping operations were not a solution in themselves, but an instrument which, together with humanitarian activities, would help to create the conditions of stability that were needed to find a political solution to conflicts. Member States were therefore responsible for ensuring that peacekeeping operations were carried out with maximum efficiency and that they fulfilled their important humanitarian and political mission as inexpensively and swiftly as possible.

90. His delegation acknowledged the significant efforts made by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to streamline its functions and improve the efficiency of its operations. One of the improvements made during 1996 was the establishment of a consultative process between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. Nonetheless, those countries' right to be heard by the Security Council should be recognized de jure, and not de facto as was currently the case.

91. Expanding the Special Committee's membership would ensure greater transparency in its work, which would suit the interests of most countries. His Government welcomed the positive work undertaken by the Secretariat regarding the establishment of a rapidly deployable operational headquarters, which would ensure a timely presence in the field in the context of peacekeeping operations, thereby preventing casualties to the extent possible. He was grateful for the exhaustive information supplied by Under-Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Department. His delegation reiterated that the composition of the headquarters should comply with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Moreover, the headquarters should be wholly funded, as soon as possible, from the regular budget of the United Nations.

92. Another issue which the Special Committee should examine was that of the necessary coordination of field activities with the work of humanitarian assistance organizations, both within the United Nations system and at the level of non-governmental organizations; the important role played by such organizations, as demonstrated recently in Zaire, should not be overlooked. Problems relating to the financing of peacekeeping operations and reimbursement of costs would be resolved as soon as all Member States, and especially the major contributors, paid their assessed contributions.

93. Finally, his delegation wished to pay tribute to the men and women who had given their lives for the ideals of peace. His Government reiterated its commitment to work with the United Nations in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security in the hope that some day all the Organization's human and financial resources could be devoted to encouraging social development and improving the living conditions of people everywhere.

94. Mr. ZIMMERMAN (International Committee of the Red Cross) said that in its statements to the Committee over the past few years, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had expressed its concerns regarding the applicability

of international humanitarian law to peacekeeping or peace-enforcement forces. The changing nature of peacekeeping had heightened the need for clarification in that regard. In 1995, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had requested the Secretary-General "to complete the elaboration of a code of conduct for United Nations peacekeeping personnel, consistent with applicable international humanitarian law" (A/50/230, para. 73).

95. In conformity with its mandate to work for the understanding and dissemination of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts, ICRC had studied the possible content of such a code of conduct. To that end, it had organized meetings of experts which former commanders of United Nations forces and representatives of the Secretariat had attended; participants had analysed all the provisions of international humanitarian law in order to determine their applicability to peacekeeping operations. The experts had elaborated a draft code of conduct which had subsequently been reviewed jointly by ICRC, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. A final text, entitled "Directives for UN Forces Regarding Respect for International Humanitarian Law", had been drawn up in May 1996. The document set out the content and scope of the principles and spirit of international humanitarian law referred to in many status-of-forces agreements. The Office of Legal Affairs was currently engaged in a last round of consultations with troop-contributing countries and it was hoped that the important text would be finalized before the end of the year.

96. The Directives were designed for United Nations forces when, in a situation of armed conflict, they were actively engaged as combatants as part of a peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operation where the use of force had been authorized either in self-defence or in pursuance of a specific mandate from the Security Council. Since the Directives did not constitute an exhaustive list of the principles and rules of humanitarian law binding upon military personnel, rules of engagement or other relevant directives adapted to particular circumstances should continue to be issued. In addition, blue helmets continued to be bound by their own national legislation to respect international humanitarian law, and any violation could give rise to prosecution in their national courts.

97. Training military personnel in international humanitarian law had preventive value and offered operational advantages. United Nations troops should be exemplary in that regard. Training was the best guarantee that operations would be conducted in compliance with the law, and that United Nations contingents would be in a position to ensure that the warring parties complied with the law. Every national contingent should receive proper training before being deployed, and the above-mentioned Directives would provide an appropriate conceptual framework for such training.

98. ICRC had repeatedly called for the establishment of humanitarian spaces in situations of conflict, because the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian work was undermined whenever no clear and common understanding existed with respect to the nature of humanitarian operations. Any such understanding should be based on clear concepts laid out in the mandates entrusted to the peacekeeping forces by the Security Council. The sole purpose of humanitarian action was to ensure that the victims were assisted and protected. That was why ICRC deemed it vital that political or military action, including any action

undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations, should be conceived in such a way as not to erode the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian operations.

99. Within those parameters, and while maintaining a total independence of decision and action, ICRC personnel frequently talked with peacekeeping forces in order to clarify their respective tasks, especially in cases where the forces' mission was to facilitate or ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance or, more generally, where humanitarian issues were at stake. Cooperation and complementarity were more difficult to achieve, or were not even sought, when enforcement measures were adopted, because the nature of the relationship between ICRC and peace-enforcement troops might change, and ICRC might be called upon to fulfil its role as a neutral intermediary, for example by visiting persons detained by a United Nations force.

100. Finally, it was important to bear in mind that although humanitarian action could run parallel to military or political action, it could not replace it. Politicization of humanitarian action was detrimental to the victims of armed conflicts. Equally risky were attempts to put a humanitarian label on action of a political or military nature. ICRC and the United Nations should continue their constructive dialogue and continue to cooperate in the fulfilment of their respective mandate in the best interests of the victims of conflicts.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.